

Research on the Communication Characteristics of Traditional Culture and Influencing Factors of Communication Effect from the Perspective of the Game *Black Myth: Wukong*

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Abstract: Against the backdrop of digital technology driving the transformation of cultural communication carriers towards "dynamic interaction", games have become a core carrier for the innovative communication of traditional culture. Based on the perspective of the game *Black Myth: Wukong*, this study targets players and potential players of the game. To address the issue of insufficient sample representativeness caused by players' "circled and geographically dispersed" characteristics, a combined sampling strategy of "stratified cluster sampling + snowball sampling" is adopted. Meanwhile, a multi-model collaborative analysis framework is constructed: Logit regression and random forest models are used to identify audience heterogeneity and communication characteristics, and the XGBoost-SHAP hybrid model is employed to quantify the marginal contribution of variables to cultural cognition, systematically analyzing the influence mechanism of "game motivation - game behavior - game core" on cultural cognition. The study finds that males, the 18-25 age group, students, and enterprise employees are the core audience, and game exhibitions, social media, and trailer videos on video platforms are the key communication channels. XGBoost-SHAP analysis confirms that visual art and theme design in the game core dimension are the primary driving factors for cultural cognition, while immersive satisfaction in game motivation and high-frequency participation in game behavior also significantly and positively affect cultural cognition. This study makes up for the shortcomings of existing studies that are mainly qualitative and have limited samples, provides empirical references for "culture empowering game development and games facilitating cultural breakthrough", and promotes the coordinated development of digital entertainment and traditional culture inheritance.

Keywords: *Black Myth: Wukong*; traditional culture communication; stratified cluster sampling; XGBoost-SHAP; random forest model

1. Introduction

With the empowerment of digital technology in the cultural industry, cultural communication carriers are transforming from "static presentation" to "dynamic interaction". The 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035^[1] proposes to "implement the digital strategy for the cultural industry and accelerate the development of digital entertainment, digital creativity and other formats", endowing games with the positioning of "an innovative communication carrier for traditional culture". As a core track in digital entertainment, games, relying on immersive experience, strong interactivity, and wide coverage, have broken through the attribute of "entertainment tools" and become a link connecting traditional culture with modern audiences. *Black Myth: Wukong*, launched in August 2024, sold over 10 million copies worldwide in the first 3 days of its release and exceeded 20 million copies in the first month. It not only enhanced the international influence of domestic AAA games with top-tier production but also triggered global discussions on Chinese traditional culture through the innovative interpretation of the Journey to the West IP and the restoration of traditional architecture and art, confirming the cultural communication potential of games.

From the perspective of research status, academic circles have conducted multi-level explorations

on the cultural communication value of games: at the generalized research level, Chen Qinghua^[2] proposed that the coordination of art, plot and gameplay is the core path for integrating traditional culture into games; Huang Xiangchu^[3] analyzed the modern translation of traditional aesthetics with Genshin Impact; Zhang Baoji^[4] confirmed the role of interactivity in improving cultural acceptance through Honor of Kings. Such studies have laid a theoretical foundation for "games + culture", but most focus on light and medium mobile games. Specialized research on Black Myth: Wukong has shown multi-dimensional expansion: Xu Danli^[5] interpreted its innovative cultural expression from the perspective of media empowerment; Li Chuang^[6] analyzed the symbiotic logic between cultural core and technology; Wang Yudi^[7] and Wang Qiangchun^[8] explored its cross-cultural communication mechanism; Liu Qi^[9] regarded it as a symbol of industrial upgrading. However, existing studies still have two core defects. Firstly, sample acquisition is limited: most adopt simple random sampling or single-platform sampling, which is not adapted to the "circled and geographically dispersed" characteristics of players, and most rely on case observations or small-scale interviews, resulting in insufficient sample representativeness and difficulty in reflecting cognitive differences among different groups. Secondly, the research methods are mainly qualitative, lacking systematic quantitative analysis, only staying at theoretical interpretation or strategy induction, and failing to scientifically answer core questions such as "which factors drive the improvement of cultural cognition".

In this context, this study takes players and potential players of Black Myth: Wukong as the research objects, innovatively adopts a combined sampling strategy of "stratified cluster sampling + snowball sampling", defines the group scope through four dimensions of channels, age, region, and game habits, and ensures comprehensive sample coverage through cluster screening and snowball supplementation. Meanwhile, a "linear-nonlinear collaborative" analysis model system is constructed: Logit regression and random forest are used to capture the communication characteristics of traditional culture; structural equation model (SEM) is used to verify the linear path of "game motivation - game behavior - game core" on cultural cognition; XGBoost+SHAP model is used to explore the marginal contribution and nonlinear relationship of variables. The purpose is to identify the heterogeneous characteristics of the audience and reveal the key factors affecting cultural communication through scientific investigation and multi-model analysis, providing empirical references for "culture empowering game development and games facilitating cultural breakthrough", and promoting the coordinated development of the industry and cultural inheritance.

2. Research Method Introduction and Model Construction

2.1. Survey Design

Stratified cluster sampling adheres to the logic of "stratify first to define group scope, then select survey units in clusters", achieving accurate coverage of diverse groups via dimension division and unit screening.

2.1.1. Stratified Cluster Sampling

Stratified cluster sampling follows the core logic of "first stratifying to define the group scope, then selecting survey units in clusters", and achieves accurate coverage of groups with different characteristics through dimension division and unit screening. The specific operation methods are as follows:

(1) Setting of Stratification Dimensions

Combined with the pre-survey results of game users in December 2024, according to the core characteristics of the audience of Black Myth: Wukong, the overall population is stratified from 4 key dimensions to ensure that samples at all levels can reflect the attributes of different types of users. The stratification standards are shown in Table 1:

Table 1 Design and Basis of Stratification Dimensions for Stratified Cluster Sampling.

Stratification Dimension	Hierarchical Division	Stratification Basis
Channel Dimension	Online channels (Steam platform community, official game forum, related fan groups, etc.), offline channels (game exhibitions, university e-sports clubs, Internet cafes).	Online is the main gathering scene for players; offline can cover non-community active users, taking into account different reach scenarios.
Age Dimension	<18 years old, 18-25 years old, 26-35 years old, 36-45 years old, >45 years old.	Pre-survey shows that users of different age groups have differences in game contact frequency and cultural cognition foundation, so stratified coverage is needed.
Regional Dimension	Eastern China (Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei, Yangtze River Delta, Pearl River Delta), Central China (Hunan, Hubei, Henan and other provinces), Western China (Sichuan, Chongqing, Shaanxi and other provinces), Northeast China (Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning).	Users in different regions have differences in the cognitive level of traditional cultural elements; stratification by region can reduce regional bias.
Game Habit Dimension	Light (weekly game time <5 hours), medium (weekly game time 5-15 hours), heavy (weekly game time >15 hours).	The degree of game investment may affect the depth of contact with cultural elements; stratification by habits is needed to analyze the correlation.

(2) Screening of Cluster Units and Sampling Process

Under each stratification dimension, survey units (i.e., player gathering groups) are screened according to the standards of "ensuring the diversity of members within the unit and the activity of the unit". The screening conditions include: the daily average interaction volume (posts, comments, etc.) of the unit is ≥ 50 to ensure member participation; the regional coverage of members in the unit includes at least 3 of the above regional stratifications to avoid concentration in a single region; the unit includes users with light, medium and heavy game habits to ensure the diversity of behavioral characteristics. During sampling implementation, questionnaires are distributed online to selected online groups through the Wenjuanxing platform, and offline to selected offline gathering points (such as game exhibitions, university e-sports activity sites) to form a basic sample pool.

2.1.2. Questionnaire Quality Control

Questionnaire quality control runs through the whole process of "design - collection - integration". Reliability test and validity test are used to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire measurement tool and the validity of the data. The specific methods are as follows:

(1) Reliability Test (Cronbach's α Coefficient Method)

Cronbach's α coefficient is used to evaluate the internal consistency among items in each dimension of the questionnaire, and test whether "different items under the same dimension measure the same concept". The calculation formula is as follows:

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1} \left(1 - \sum_{i=1}^k \frac{\sigma_{r_i}^2}{\sigma_x^2} \right) \quad (1)$$

Among them, k represents the total number of items in the questionnaire or scale; $\sigma_{r_i}^2$ represents the total score variance; σ_x^2 represents the score variance of the x -th question.

(2) Validity Test (KMO Test and Bartlett's Sphericity Test)

KMO test and Bartlett's sphericity test are used to evaluate the construct validity of the questionnaire and judge whether "questionnaire items can effectively reflect the concept of the

corresponding dimension". The specific methods are as follows:

The KMO test is used to measure the partial correlation between variables and judge whether the data is suitable for factor analysis. The judgment standard is: when the KMO value > 0.7 , the data is suitable for factor analysis; when the KMO value ≤ 0.7 , the data is not suitable for factor analysis, and the item design needs to be optimized. Bartlett's sphericity test is used to test whether the correlation matrix between variables is an identity matrix (i.e., no correlation between variables). The test logic is: if the p-value of the test result < 0.05 , it indicates that there is a significant correlation between variables, and the questionnaire construct validity is up to standard; if the p-value ≥ 0.05 , the items need to be adjusted to improve the correlation between variables. The calculation formula is as follows:

$$K^2 = \frac{1}{c} [(n - r) \ln \text{MSE} - \sum_{i=1}^r (n_i - 1) \ln s_i^2] \quad (2)$$

$$c = 1 + \frac{1}{3(r-1)} \left[\sum_{i=1}^r \frac{1}{n_i - 1} - \frac{1}{n - r} \right] \quad (3)$$

Among them, r represents the number of groups; s_i^2 represents the standard deviation of each group; and MSE represents the mean square error.

2.2. Communication Characteristic Analysis Model

To accurately identify the core characteristics and heterogeneous differences of the communication audience of Black Myth: Wukong, aiming at the binary classification decision variable of "whether having played the game", a binary choice model system of "linear hypothesis verification - nonlinear relationship supplement" is constructed. Through the collaborative analysis of the Logit regression and random forest classification model, the key factors affecting players' game participation are revealed. The details are as follows:

2.2.1. Logit Regression Model

Based on the logistic function, the Logit regression model converts the linear effect of independent variables on the binary dependent variable of "whether having played Black Myth: Wukong" into probability output, which is mainly used to quantify the linear impact of each characteristic on players' participation behavior.

In this paper, "whether having played Black Myth: Wukong" is taken as the dependent variable, and 34 core characteristics such as player gender, age, education background, occupation, cognitive channel, and game consumption are selected as independent variables to construct a Logit binary choice model, so as to explore the linear impact of each variable on players' participation behavior. The core formula of the model is set as follows:

$$\ln \frac{P_i}{1 - P_i} = \sum \alpha_i x_i (i = 1, 2, 3, \dots, 34) \quad (4)$$

Among them, P_i is the probability that the i -th respondent has played the game; α_0 is the constant term; $\alpha_1 - \alpha_{34}$ are the coefficients of each independent variable.

2.2.2. Random Forest Classification Model

To make up for the limitation of the "linear relationship assumption" of the Logit regression model, a random forest classification model is further constructed as a supplementary analysis tool to capture the nonlinear correlation and interaction effect between variables. The model takes 34 core characteristics of Logit regression (including gender, age, etc.) as input, and "whether having played the game" (1 = having played, 0 = not having played) as the dependent variable. Multiple CART classification trees are constructed based on Bootstrap resampling: 70% of the 561 samples are drawn (with replacement) to train a single tree, and 30% are used to calculate the out-of-bag error; each tree randomly selects a subset of features and splits according to Gini impurity to prevent overfitting; finally, the classification result is determined by majority voting. The core logic is:

$$\hat{y} = \arg \max_{c \in \{0, 1\}} \frac{1}{K} \sum_{k=1}^K I(f_k(x) = c) \quad (5)$$

In the formula, K is the total number of decision trees; $f_k(x)$ is the classification result of the k -th tree; $I(\cdot)$ is the indicator function.

For parameter optimization and sample division, a 5-fold cross-validation combined with the grid search method is used to optimize the core parameters of the model, balancing classification accuracy

and generalization ability. The search ranges for the model parameters and their corresponding optimal values are detailed in Table 2; at the same time, the total samples are stratified into training set (393 samples) and test set (168 samples) in a ratio of 7:3. The stratification is based on "game habits" and "age groups" to ensure that the two groups of samples maintain consistency in the distribution of core characteristics and avoid sampling bias affecting model performance.

Table 2 Parameter Optimization Results of Random Forest Classification Model.

Parameter Name	Search Range	Optimal Value
n_estimators	[50, 100, 200, 300]	100
max_depth	[3, 5, 7, 9, None]	6
min_samples_split	[2, 5, 10, 15]	10
min_samples_leaf	[1, 3, 5, 7]	5
max_features	['sqrt', 'log2', None]	'sqrt'

2.3. Influencing Factor Identification Model

To systematically analyze the influence mechanism of "game motivation - game behavior - game core" on "the level of cultural cognition", aiming at the nonlinear correlation and complex interaction effect of the influencing factors of game cultural communication, XGBoost regression model and SHAP (Shapley Additive exPlanations) value analysis method are introduced to construct a hybrid research framework of "accurate prediction - interpretability enhancement".

2.3.1. Variable Setting

This paper starts from three dimensions: game motivation, game behavior, and game core. Game motivation includes 4 observation variables, such as immersive satisfaction and social satisfaction; game behavior includes 3 observation variables, such as time investment and money investment; game core includes 4 observation variables, such as visual art and theme design. The specific situation is shown in Table 3:

Table 3 Model Variable Design.

Dimension	Specific Variables	Definition and Description
Game Motivation	Immersive Satisfaction	Being able to temporarily get rid of real troubles in the game; entering an ideal world that is difficult to achieve in reality
	Social Satisfaction	Enjoying cooperation with partners, strengthening connections with real friends, or forming new social relationships in the game
	Utilitarian Satisfaction	Self-identity brought by game victory or rank improvement
	Hedonic Satisfaction	The game mechanism itself is full of fun and excitement
Game Behavior	Time Investment	Time invested in the game
	Money Investment	Money invested in the game
	Game Frequency	Frequency of playing the game
Game Core	Visual Art	The art style and visual presentation of the game create an immersive experience for players.
	Theme Design	The core theme of the game and the in-depth meaning conveyed.
	Gameplay Mechanism	The core gameplay and rules of the game define the way players interact.
	Characters and Plot	Character shaping and plot development, enhancing emotional resonance.

2.3.2. XGBoost Model Construction and Parameter Optimization

The model takes 11 observation variables of "game motivation - game behavior - game core" as input features and the comprehensive score of "the level of cultural cognition" as the dependent variable, and realizes prediction by integrating multiple CART regression trees. Its objective function includes a loss term (measuring the deviation between predicted value and true value) and a regularization term (controlling the complexity of the tree structure to avoid overfitting). The formula is as follows:

$$L(\phi) = \sum_{i=1}^n l(y_i, \hat{y}_i^{(t)}) + \sum_{k=1}^t \Omega(f_k) \tag{6}$$

In the formula, l is the squared error loss function; $\Omega(f_k) = \gamma T + \frac{1}{2} \lambda \sum_{j=1}^T w_j^2$ (where T is the number of leaf nodes, w_j is the weight of leaf nodes, γ and λ are regularization coefficients).

Five-fold cross-validation integrated with the grid search approach was adopted to optimize the model's core parameters, so as to strike a balance between the model's fitting accuracy and its generalization performance, whose search ranges and corresponding optimal values are detailed in Table 4.

Table 4 Parameter Optimization Results of XGBoost Regression Model.

Parameter Name	Search Range	Optimal Value
max_depth	[3,5,7,9]	5
learning_rate	[0.01,0.1,0.2]	0.1
n_estimators	[50,100,200]	100
subsample	[0.7,0.8,0.9,1.0]	0.8
colsample_bytree	[0.7,0.8,0.9,1.0]	0.8

2.3.3. SHAP Value Interpretation Framework

To quantify the marginal contribution of each input variable to "the level of cultural cognition", the SHAP value analysis method is introduced. Its core idea is derived from the Shapley value in game theory. By calculating the average marginal effect of variables in all feature subset combinations, the interpretable decomposition of model prediction results is realized. The calculation formula is as follows:

$$\phi_i(f) = \sum_{S \subseteq N \setminus \{i\}} \frac{|S|! \cdot (|N| - |S| - 1)!}{|N|!} \cdot [f(S \cup \{i\}) - f(S)] \tag{7}$$

In the formula, S is the feature subset; N is the full set of features; $\phi_i(f)$ is the SHAP value of the i -th variable. This method can effectively identify the order of variable importance, nonlinear influence characteristics, and interaction effects between variables, providing a quantitative basis for subsequent analysis of the influence mechanism of games on cultural cognition.

3. Empirical Result Analysis

3.1. Data Quality Test Results

The reliability test results are shown in Table 5 and Table 6. The total Cronbach's α of the questionnaire for the group that has played Black Myth: Wukong is 0.82, and that for the group that has not played is 0.81. In the validity test, the KMO value of the group that has played is 0.83, Bartlett χ^2 is 450.23 ($p < 0.001$); the KMO value of the group that has not played is 0.78, Bartlett χ^2 is 380.56 ($p < 0.001$). Both reliability and validity meet the standards.

Table 5 Reliability Test (Cronbach's α) Results.

Group Type	Core Indicators	Calculation Results
Group that has played the game	Cronbach's α (Total)	0.82
	α of Game Motivation Dimension	0.79
	α of Game Core Dimension	0.81
Group that has not played the game	Cronbach's α (Total)	0.81
	α of Cultural Interest Dimension	0.76

Table 6 Validity Test (KMO + Bartlett) Results.

Group Type	Core Indicators	Calculation Results
Group that has played the game	KMO Value	0.83
	Bartlett χ^2	450.23
	p Value	<0.001
Group that has not played the game	KMO Value	0.78
	Bartlett χ^2	380.56
	p Value	<0.001

3.2. Analysis of Player Heterogeneity and Communication Characteristics Based on Binary Choice Model

Aiming at the binary classification decision variable of "whether having played Black Myth: Wukong", Logit regression is used to quantify the linear impact, and random forest is used to capture the nonlinear correlation, revealing the heterogeneous characteristics of players and the core laws of game communication.

3.2.1. Logit Regression Model Results

Taking "whether having played the game" as the dependent variable (1 = having played, 0 = not having played), 34 independent variables such as gender, age, occupation, cognitive channel, and consumption range are included. The model fitting degree is good (McFadden $R^2=0.43$, $\chi^2=78.62$, $p<0.001$). Table 7 presents the coefficients and statistical information of some significantly influential variables.

The results show that the player heterogeneity characteristics are significant: in terms of player group characteristics, males, young adults, students, and workplace professionals are the main player groups of Black Myth: Wukong. Game exhibitions/social media are important channels for players to obtain information. In terms of game behavior, most variables of game frequency and duration have no significant impact on game participation, but players with a consumption range of 300-500 yuan have a higher willingness to play the game, which is highly consistent with the game's positioning of "AAA quality and cultural core", and also provides a clear audience portrait for subsequent precise communication.

Table 7 Logit Regression Model Significant Variable Results (Partial).

Variable Name	Coefficient	Standard Deviation	Wald Statistic	p Value
Male	0.460	0.116	3.52	0.068*
18-25 Years Old	-0.630	0.242	-2.61	0.012**
26-30 Years Old	-0.5773	0.2289	-2.59	0.045**
Student	0.708	0.229	3.09	0.003***
Enterprise Employee	0.3330	0.2242	1.49	0.044**
Game Exhibitions/Social Media	0.378	0.358	2.06	0.096*
300-500 Yuan Consumption Range	0.914	0.246	3.71	0.001***

Note: * $p<0.1$, ** $p<0.05$, *** $p<0.01$

3.2.2. Random Forest Classification Model Results

To make up for the limitation of the linear assumption of the Logit regression, a random forest model is constructed, and variable importance is calculated through Gini impurity. The core results are shown in Table 8.

Consistent with the Logit regression results, males, young people, and students are the main characteristics of players, and game exhibitions/social media are important channels for players to obtain information. However, the random forest captures the nonlinear correlation not covered by Logit

- trailer videos on video platforms and friends' word-of-mouth have a significant impact on players' participation, and players with a consumption of 100-300 yuan also have a higher willingness to play the game.

Table 8 Random Forest Classification Importance Score Table (Partial).

Ranking	Variable Name	Importance Score
1	Male	0.181
2	18-25 Years Old	0.155
3	Student	0.148
4	Trailer Videos on Video Platforms	0.102
5	Enterprise Employee	0.101
6	100-300 Yuan Consumption Range	0.091
7	Game Exhibitions/Social Media	0.089
8	Friend Introduction	0.087

3.3. Analysis of Influencing Factors of Cultural Cognition Based on "XGBoost-SHAP"

Based on the XGBoost regression model and SHAP interpretation framework constructed in Section 2.3, this part analyzes the influence law of various factors on "the level of cultural cognition", providing a quantitative basis for the core driving factors of game cultural communication.

3.3.1. XGBoost Model Results Based on SHAP Interpretation

Based on the analysis of XGBoost and SHAP values (see Figure 1), we conducted an in-depth study on the influencing factors of the cultural inheritance effect. The following results are obtained: the level of cultural cognition is affected by various factors, among which visual art, theme design, gameplay mechanism, characters, and plot have significant impacts on the cultural inheritance effect. Visual art has the greatest impact on the level of cultural cognition, which may mean that in cultural products or experiences, the design and presentation of visual elements play an important role in users' cognition and feelings.

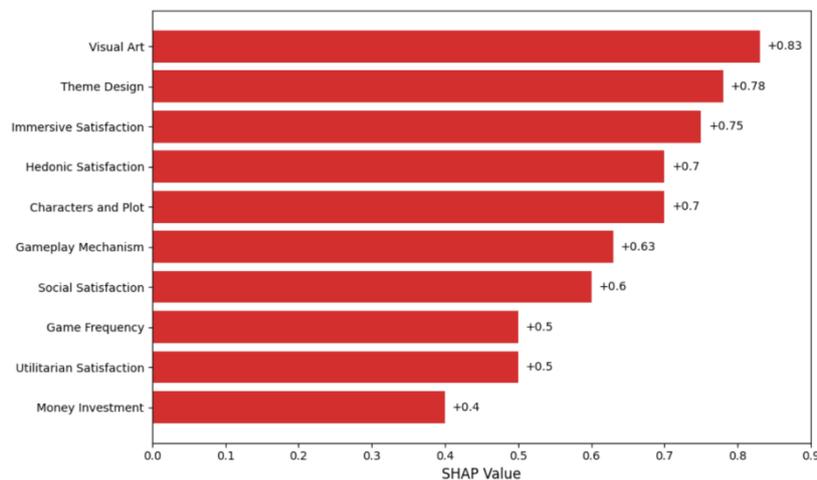


Figure 1 Importance of various factors on the level of cultural cognition.

4. Conclusion

Taking Black Myth: Wukong as the object, this study explores traditional culture's communication characteristics and influencing factors via innovative methods. The combined sampling strategy (stratified cluster + snowball) solves the sample representativeness issue, with reliable data (Cronbach's $\alpha=0.81-0.82$, KMO=0.78-0.83). The multi-model framework identifies core audiences (males, 18-25, students/enterprise employees) and key channels (game exhibitions, social media, trailers); XGBoost-SHAP confirms visual art, theme design, immersive satisfaction, and high-frequency participation as

key drivers of cultural cognition.

This study supplements existing qualitative and small-sample studies, revealing the core logic of "game content quality determines communication effectiveness, and immersive experience promotes cognitive transformation". It provides empirical references for "culture empowering games and games facilitating cultural breakthrough", with practical significance for digital entertainment and traditional culture inheritance coordination.

The study also has limitations: the measurement of cultural cognition relies on subjective scores, lacking the support of objective behavioral data; it only focuses on AAA action games, and the universality of the conclusions for other types of cultural games needs to be further verified. Future research can be optimized by targeting these aspects, providing more scientific, theoretical, and practical references for the communication of "games + traditional culture".

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